

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 /085 W
-----129370 072022Z /66

R 071433Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4723
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION UN
SECDEF
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5700

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, SY, MARR
SUBJECT: SYRIA CONTINUES TO DISPLAY DISILLUSIONMENT WITH U.S.

1. SUMMARY: SARG CONTINUES TO SIGNAL THAT IT IS UNHAPPY
WITH CURRENT STATUS OF PEACE PROCESS, BUT IN WAKE OF ARAB
LEAGUE MEETING IT MAY IN NAME OF UNIFIED ARAB POSITION BE
MODERATING ITS VIRTUAL PUBLIC DISMISSAL OF US ROLE.
IN CONTRAST TO COMMENTS OVER PAST TWO WEEKS, ONE EDITORIAL
SEPTEMBER 7 SIGNALS THAT SARG MAY PREFER US MEDIATION TO
RELIANCE ON INTERNATIONAL FORA IF US HAS SPECIFIC SCENARIO
IN MIND. END SUMMARY

2. THAWRA, SEPTEMBER 7 EDITORIAL TAKES NEW TACK IN APPROACH
TO US MEDIATION ASKING:
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"-SHOULD WE GO ON WAGERING ON AN AMERICAN ROLE, WITHOUT
A CLEARLY DEFINED TIMETABLE OR WITHOUT A PROCEDURAL
TIME SEQUENCE THAT WOULD REVEAL THE DEGREE OF AMERICAN
PEACEFUL INTENTIONS? (NO ANSWER) THE QUESTION PUT IN ANOTHER
WAY: DO WE LEAVE THE INITIATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL FORA, OR
SHOULD UNITY OF THE ARAB STANCE BE BASED ON A SPECIFIC

PHILOSOPHY, CONDITIONAL UPON SUCCESS WITHIN A SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME, SO THAT IF THIS PHILOSOPHY FAILS, THE POSITION WOULD BE UNIFIED AROUND THE ALTERNATIVE?"

3. AL-BAATH ON SEPTEMBER 5 RAN EDITORIAL MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF RECENT ATTACKS ON US ENTITLED "THE OUTCOME OF AMERICAN EFFORTS" WHICH ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHY HAVE US EFFORTS BROUGHT THE AREA TO SUCH DANGEROUS IMPASSE THAT IT HAS BECOME DIFFICULT TO SEE A RAY OF LIGHT ON THE ROAD TO PEACE?" EDITORIAL PROFESSED TO SEE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN "KISSINGER'S" POLICIES OF STEP-BY-STEP" AND THOSE OF CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WHICH CALL FOR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. KISSINGER, IT WAS CLAIMED, TRIED TO SPLIT THE ARABS AND WEAKEN THEIR COMMITMENT TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE. IT IMPLIED THAT, DESPITE WHAT APPEARED TO BE POSITIVE STEP BY CARTER'S ADMINISTRATION WHEN IT ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR CONCEPT OF PALESTINIAN HOMELAND, NEW ADMINISTRATION WAS DEMANDING CONCESSIONS OF ARABS WHILE STRENGTHENING ISRAEL MILITARILY ON PRETEXT THAT FURTHER WEAPONS SALES WOULD GIVE ISRAEL CONFIDENCE TO NEGOTIATE. EDITORIAL ALLUDED TO RECENT ISRAELI POLICIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS," AND CONCLUDED THAT ISRAEL, SUPPORTED BY US EFFORTS, IS DRIVING AREA TO NEW WAR. IT CALLED UPON ARABS TO UNITE AND REVERSE DECLINE CAUSED BY US EFFORTS.

4. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL FOLLOWING DAY WAS MORE EXPLICIT
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ABOUT CAUSES FOR SYRIAN DISPLEASURE WITH US. IT NOTED THAT US WHEN FACED WITH "ZIONIST MEASURES" (IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES) REFUSED TO SUPPORT OUTLINE OF ITS PROPOSED SOLUTION BUT RESTRICTED ITSELF TO VERBAL OBJECTIONS WHILE ANNOUNCING ITS RELUCTANCE TO PRESSURE ISRAEL. EDITORIAL SAID: "THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION DOESN'T SEEM CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR REACHING A SOLUTION EVEN WITHIN THE GUIDELINES IT IS COMMITTED TO." IT CONCLUDED THAT NO JUSTIFICATION EXISTS FOR PLACING ANY HOPE ON US.

5. THIS SEQUENCE OF EDITORIALS OCCURRED AGAINST BACKDROP OF SYRIAN EFFORT AND APPARENT FAILURE TO PERSUADE ARABS TO ADOPT HARDER AND MORE AGGRESSIVE LINE AGAINST ISRAEL IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. SYRIAN VIEW AS ENUNCIATED AT RECENT ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFERENCE IS THAT ISRAEL'S MEMBERSHIP IN UN AGENCIES SHOULD BE FROZEN AND STATES MAINTAINING DIPLOMATIC AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL SHOULD SEVER THOSE TIES, BUT SYRIA FOR THE MOMENT APPEAR TO HAVE GIVEN IN TO MORE MODERATE ARAB VOICES IN PURSUIT OF A UNIFIED ARAB POSITION. NEVERTHELESS, CONCESSION IN NAME OF ARAB UNITY, UNLIKELY TO

REFLECT ANY REAL CHANGE IN SYRIAN DOUBTS ABOUT US INTENTIONS.

6. EAST GERMAN RDA CORESPONDENT, GUNTER HUNDRO, TOLD
POLOFF SEPTEMBER 6 THAT HE HAD IMPRESSION SYRIANS ARE
DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED THAT SECRETARY RETURNED FROM ISRAEL
"EMPTY-HANDED" AND THIS HAS CAUSED THEM TO REASSESS
DEGREE TO WHICH THEY SHOULD RELY ON US INITIATIVES. HE
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ASSAD OR VERY HIGH RANKING SYRIAN
OFFICIAL WOULD SOON VISIT MOSCOW TO FURTHER SIGNAL SYRIAN
DISPLEASURE OVER RECENT US PERFORMANCE AND BALANCE KHADDAM'S
TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK.

7. COMMENT: WHILE SYRIAN ORCHESTRATING MEDIA CAMPAIGN
PARTIALY FOR OUR BENEFIT CAND PARTIALLY TO SHORE UP
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AL-ASSAD'S INTERNAL POSITION SHOULD PEACE EFFORTS REACH
IMPASSE, WE TAKE SERIOUSLY POSSIBILITY THAT ASSAD'S REGIME
WILL PROVE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH, IN SPITE
OF ITS BOW IN DIRECTION OF ARAB UNITY, IF IT REMAINS
UNCONVINCED OF US WILLINGNESS TO DEFLECT ISRAEL FROM ITS
CURRENT POLICIES.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 07-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Review Release Date: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1369135
Secure: OPEN
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vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9840034d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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